

My life in boarding school

Hannah Akeke had a horrible start to her life as a boarder in Nigeria. But, on reflection, she is glad she went and would like to go back.

The name of the school is Command Secondary School. When I first got there with my parents I was very happy because I thought I would be going home every weekend but when I was told that I wasn't I started crying because the thought of not seeing my parents was driving me crazy.



I was given uniforms and everything that I would need for the term. And when it was time for my parents to leave I started crying and also my cousin - who was just 11 months old so knew nothing about what was happening - was also crying. I was then taken to the dormitory where I saw every other person happy and I tried as much as I could to fit in but I could not because my mind was at home. I started feeling home sick and wanted to go home as soon as possible.

A month later I was sick because I could not eat the school food and my clothes, money and provisions were all stolen and there was no way that I could contact my parents. I could not even concentrate in the classroom.

All I could think of was being at home with my family. I did not take my medication because I did not eat and also there was no phone booth, meaning no means to contact my parents. I was angry and felt lonely.

When my parents eventually came to visit me, I was so happy to see them and when they wanted to leave it felt like it was just 30 minutes ago that they came and that now they were being taken away from me. I felt like I was in hell and I started crying. I thought they hated me and that was why they dumped me in a boarding school, but little did I know that they were building a future for me so I don't have to depend on anyone for anything.

And then it was time for the school holidays. I did not do well in my exams but that was the last thing on my mind. All I wanted to do was see my parents again.

I was sick, weak, lean, I could not even stand properly. My uncle was sent to pick me up but I didn't see him and therefore headed home which I have never done but I asked people for directions. Finally it was almost my home stop and then I saw our driver and called his name. He was very surprised at the way I looked because I could not even speak properly I was so weak.

When I got home, my parents were shocked they could not speak. My mum bathed me and gave me something to eat but I couldn't eat anything and could not even tell what was going on.

The next minute I found myself in a hospital bed. I guess I must have fainted although I didn't have a clue. I saw my parents arguing about whose fault it was for sending me to a boarding school.

It was almost two weeks to Christmas and I was still in hospital. My mum was scared because it was the first time that I had been to a hospital. Almost a week later and there was still no improvement in my health. Mum was getting more scared that she hung the dress that she had bought for me on the hospital wall so that when I woke up I saw it, and she begged me to get better so that I could wear the dress.

Three days later, I was fit and ready to go home. I was so happy to be home because it was my first night out of a hospital bed. Although I still had my medication to take, I was feeling a lot better.

Christmas was soon over and I was preparing to go back to school. My mum called me and asked me if I wanted to go back to the boarding school. I wanted to say no but I thought of the money spent on me so far and then I decided to go for it. Later I got used to it and now I'm so grateful to my parents for sending me to a boarding school.

Even though there were major ups and downs in the school like someone dying, finding insects in the food that you were eating, and even seeing the head prefect whip someone until the person had internal bleeding, that did not put me off.

I still miss the school and if I had another chance I would love to go back there because I have learnt a lot and also it is an experience that I would love to have again.

About this article

This article was written by Hannah Akeke, a member of Headliners' outreach programme Project Subway.

1 comment

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Dear Ms. Hannah. Your story in boarding school is almost exactly like mine. I have spent my whole life in boarding school, right from the age of 5. I feel it has only mady my mind and body sick.....I hate to think of my children in such conditions. Even now I cry thinking of those 'jail' life.
Thomas from India, 30 December 1899 00:00

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